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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001555

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TAGS: [MNUC](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: GDRC URGES UNSC ACTION IN RESPONSE TO GATUMBA CAMP ATTACK

1. (U) Summary: In the absence of other senior officials, the International Cooperation Vice Minister, an RCD-Goma appointee, convoked UNSC Perm 5 heads of mission August 16 to urge support for an international investigation, a more vigorous MONUC disarmament mandate, and aid to attack victims. He also requested all efforts be made with "neighboring countries" to encourage security cooperation in the area. Answering a question, the Vice Minister said that the GDRC was willing to meet with Burundian and Rwandan representatives before the end of the month, but declined to affirm whether he expected such a meeting to occur. End summary.

2. (C) In the absence of President Kabila, the Foreign Minister, and many other senior officials attending the SADC summit in Mauritius, Vice Minister of International Cooperation Christian Kambinga Sale convoked heads of mission of the UNSC Perm 5 countries to the Foreign Ministry the afternoon of August 16. (Comment: Kambinga, a Katangan member of the RCD-G, was once responsible for that party's contacts with the diplomatic community. Although occasionally espousing an RCD-G hardline, in general we have found him to be moderate and reasonable. End comment.)

3. (U) The Vice Minister reiterated GDRC reaction to the brutal August 14 attack on Congolese refugees at the Gatumba camp in Burundi, referring to prior statements issued by the Presidency. He criticized UNHCR for having located the camp adjacent to a Burundi military base. In his presentation, he appealed for support from the UNSC permanent members in the several areas. Specifically:

a) To push for a rapid and thorough independent international investigation of the attack. The Vice Minister said that only such an independent international investigation would be credible. He added that the GDRC did want to point fingers yet regarding allegations of involvement, but said that all avenues needed to be explored. (Comment: A reference to widespread charges of involvement by Mai Mai or other Congolese groups, and Rwandan Hutu extremists in addition to the Burundian FNL. End comment).

b) To support calls for an expanded and more aggressive MONUC mandate relative to disarmament. By expanding, the Vice Minister made it clear he was referring to authorization for disarmament by force of "negative elements," a term long used to refer to Hutu extremist elements in the region and their supporters.

c) To encourage neighboring countries to maintain contact with the GDRC and cooperate fully regarding the international investigation and generally help to address general insecurity in the region. In his remarks, the Vice Minister particularly noted USG and Belgian efforts to-date to promote regional dialogue.

d) To favorably consider the need for additional aid to victims of the attack. The Vice Minister acknowledged activity by UNHCR and NGO,s, but observed that the brutality of the attack and the number of family victims greatly increased the impact on a large number of people in the camps, and likely relatives in the DRC as well, creating additional burdens that the UNHCR and others may be hard pressed to meet.

4. (C) The Vice Minister reported that a significant GDRC delegation, including a number of parliamentarians, had traveled to Bujumbura to be present for funeral ceremonies, talk with Burundian authorities and most importantly with the surviving refugees themselves. He affirmed that the GDRC continues to wish for the refugees to return home as soon as possible. (Comment: MONUC reports that, in addition to VP Ruberwa, the GDRC was represented in Gatumba by Minister of Interior Mbemba and several Parliamentarians. Also present, perhaps unfortunately, were "the group of eight," i.e., the disaffected RCD-G parliamentarians headed by Bizima Karaha, and Banyamulenge community extremists including Kadage, who MONUC believes to be responsible for the widespread recruitment (sometimes by force) of Banyamulenge youth from the Cyangagu refugee camp for a "Banyamulenge Defense Force." End Comment)

5. (U) The Ambassador and the other Perm 5 mission heads reiterated condemnation of the Gatumba attack and other elements of the August 15 International Committee to

Accompany the Transition (CIAT) communique and UNSC Presidential statement. The Ambassador noted a further USG statement would likely be issued on Monday as well in Washington.

16. (U) Near the end of the meeting, the French Charge asked the Vice Minister about reports of a possible meeting of GDRC, Burundian, and Rwandan officials toward the end of the month. Hesitating slightly, the Minister stated that the GDRC certainly was willing to participate in such a meeting, but he declined to elaborate further, nor confirm that he expected any such meeting to occur.

17. (C) Comment: Although Kambinga's presentation was moderate and reasonable, general reaction to the tragedy appears to be becoming increasingly extreme. There are mounting reports of RCD members purchasing one-way tickets for themselves and their families to return to eastern Congo, as mumblings that the Tutsis organized the massacre themselves to generate international sympathy multiply. Even moderate members of the Banyamulenge community, normally not given to exaggeration, are anxiously discussing the possibility of a reprise of the 1996 anti-Tutsi bloodbath in Kinshasa and elsewhere. To a certain extent, these sentiments reflect old, underlying tensions, particularly among the RCD, many of whom have reportedly felt insecure in Kinshasa. The events in Gatumbe may have temporarily intensified these predispositions, but we believe that if the massacre investigation is handled promptly and thoroughly, these concerns can be dispelled.

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